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The Nation

Civil Service Pay Proposal

The Defense Department has asked Congress to adopt a sweeping proposal to revamp the federal Civil Service system by replacing the pay and grade scale with a pay-for-performance approach, according to documents released by Rep. Michael D. Barnes (D-Md.). The proposal would give most agencies the authority to establish their own classification, pay and performance systems, and give managers maximum flexibility to adjust salaries without the constraints of existing grade and step levels. Barnes attacked the proposal, saying it "would politicize the federal work force by allowing managers to reward political loyalists and penalize career federal employees."

Workers plugged a leak in a derailed railroad car from which lethal ammonia gas had seeped since the day before, and authorities ended an evacuation that had forced 1,000 people from their homes in a sparsely populated area west of Lake City, Fla. Chemical experts pumped the anhydrous ammonia from the tanker, which derailed along with 37 other cars of a 144-car Seaboard System Railroad train. Railroad spokesman Mark Sullivan said the accident probably was due to equipment failure. No injuries were reported.

Retail gasoline prices dropped in early October, continuing a 14-week slide and outpacing the drop in wholesale prices for the first time since April, said Dan Lundberg, oil industry analyst in Los Angeles. An Oct. 11 survey of 17,000 gasoline stations nationwide showed the average price for all grades of gasoline dipped to \$1.20 a gallon, compared to \$1.21 a gallon in the previous survey on Sept. 20. Wholesale prices dropped an average of 0.84 cents, he said.

Light snows fell in the mountains of Colorado and southeastern Wyoming and the cold front brought rain and fog to much of the

Midwest, southeastern Texas, Louisiana and southern Florida. New England and eastern New York state had freezing rain along with unseasonably cool temperatures. Tropical Depression Isabel, with winds of up to 30 m.p.h., triggered thunderstorms off the coast of North Carolina.

Timmy and Lisa Ann Stamatis, adoptive parents of a 23-month-old girl with Down's syndrome, plan to ask the Court of Appeals in Albany, N.Y., to overturn an August ruling by the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court that annulled the adoption consent given by the natural parents, Warren and Christine Kosher, and ordered the child returned. The Koshers surrendered their daughter for adoption Nov. 11, 1983, five days after her birth. During court adoption proceedings, the Koshers decided they wanted their child. They said they hadn't realized they had up to 30 days to change their minds from the time the adoption proceeding began.

Search crews with trained dogs combed the banks of the Coamo River near Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico, seeking the remains of six persons believed drowned when a bridge collapsed during torrential rains last week. Meanwhile, Army engineers with listening devices made a final check for survivors in the ruins of the Mameyes district of Ponce, where more than 500 shacks were buried by a mud slide following the Oct. 6 storm.

Several scholars planned to withdraw from a conference on Islamic fundamentalism this week at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., after learning the CIA was one of its sponsors. The CIA connection was disclosed Friday when A. Michael Spence, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, issued a statement saying Prof. Nadav Safran had failed to go through proper university channels by not reporting a \$45,700 grant from the intelligence agency.